



United States Attorney's Office
District of Columbia

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PRESS RELEASE

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District of Columbia Doctor Sentenced to 53 Months in Prison for Health Care Fraud

WASHINGTON - A local doctor, Ehigiator O. Akhigbe, who is licensed in the District of Columbia and who practiced medicine under the name of Mercigab Medical Center and Pain Clinic, has been sentenced to 53 months of incarceration, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Shawn Henry, Assistant Director of the FBI's Washington Field Office, and Charles J. Willoughby, Inspector General for the District of Columbia, announced today. Dr. Akhigbe received his sentence yesterday before visiting Senior U.S. District Court Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr., who also imposed three years of supervised release, a special assessment of \$1700, and ordered the defendant to forfeit \$133, 418 of proceeds derived from his health care fraud conviction. Previously, on December 16, 2009, Dr. Akhigbe was found guilty by a federal jury in the District of Columbia of one count of Health Care Fraud and sixteen counts of False Statements in Health Care Matters.

According to the government's evidence, during the period from December 2002 through May 2005, Akhigbe repeatedly submitted false claims to Amerigroup Corporation ("Amerigroup"), which contracted with the District of Columbia Medicaid Program to provide health care services to low income D.C. residents. Akhigbe, who prepared and submitted his own billing to Amerigroup, repeatedly submitted false claims in which he purported to have performed invasive surgical procedures on D.C. Medicaid patients that were never performed; billed for "ghost office" visits that never occurred; and continued to bill for a period of time after a minor or major procedure during which no additional bills could be submitted, in violation of Global Billing rules. To substantiate the false billing, the defendant created false progress notes

indicating the dates, times and surgical procedures that he claimed to have performed and inserted the false progress notes into his patients' medical files to corroborate a number of the false claims.

U.S. Attorney Machen stated, “the significant prison term imposed on Dr. Akhigbe reflects how serious the court views health care fraud by individuals who are entrusted to provide medical care to the poor, but instead defraud the health care system to line their own pockets. We are pleased with the court’s sentence in this case because it sends a clear message to those who abuse the health care system that the price they pay for their fraudulent conduct may be the loss of their liberty for an extended period of time.”

The U.S. Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the District of Columbia Medicaid Fraud Control Unit remain committed to uncovering and prosecuting health care professionals who abuse the public trust and enrich themselves through blatant fraud and abuse.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, FBI Assistant Director in Charge Henry, and D.C. Inspector General Willoughby extended their appreciation to Amerigroup’s internal fraud investigators who first uncovered and reported defendant Akhigbe’s conduct. They also praised the outstanding efforts of current and former Special Agents of the Health Care Fraud Unit at the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Washington Field Office and Criminal Investigator Sandy Adams and Auditor Clark Geiger of the D.C. Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. They additionally commended the efforts of Paralegal Specialists Diane Hayes, Tasha Harris, Mary Treanor, Carolyn Cody, Margaret McCabe, Sarah Reis, Legal Assistants Sierra Tate and Jamasee Lucas and Litigation Support Specialists Joseph Calvarese and Josh Ellen. Finally, they praised the work of Special Assistant U.S. Attorney from the DC Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Jacqueline Schesnol, and Assistant U.S. Assistant Attorney Lionel André, who indicted and prosecuted the case.

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